SITUATION REPORT ON EMERGENCY TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PESTS (ETOPS) FOR
MARCH AND APRIL WITH A FORECAST TILL MID-JUNE, 2002 (SITREP3.4.02).

SUMMARY

1. Summary: This report provides an update about recent activities on emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs) in Africa, the Middle-East, Central and Southwest Asia, as well as Latin America. The report covers March and April with a forecast till mid-June, 2002. It addresses major migratory pests, including desert, migratory, red, Moroccan, and Madagascar migratory locusts, armyworm and red-billed quelea birds. A brief overview of the current status of each of these pests is provided in the remainder of this summary and detailed accounts are provided thereafter.

2. Desert locust, Schistocerca gregaria (Forskal). The desert locust situation remained calm in March and April in the outbreak areas. Very few solitary adults were reported in northwestern Mauritania, Niger and the Red Sea coasts of Sudan and Eritrea. Conditions have improved in eastern Ethiopia and northwestern Somalia, however, significant activities are not expected during the forecast period.

3. No locusts were seen or reported in the Arabian Peninsula where unusual rain, associated with a storm front that moved in from the Horn of Africa, fell in April. It is assumed that some locusts might have moved from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman with the wind storm.

4. Small-scale breeding was reported in western Pakistan, but the rest of the summer breeding areas in the region remained calm. Significant locust developments are not likely during the forecast period.

5. Red locust, Nomadacris septemfasciata (Surville). Significant red locust populations persisted in the Iku-Katavi and Malagarasi outbreak areas, Tanzania. The situation in other red locust outbreak areas remained relatively calm. With the beginning of grass burning in June, locust populations will concentrate in Iku-Katavi and Malagarasi outbreak areas, Tanzania and may form swarmlets. Other member countries of the International Red Locust Control Organizations for Central and Southern Africa (IRLOC/CSA) will remain relatively calm during the forecast period.

6. Madagascar migratory locust, Locusta migratoria capito (L.). No reports were received on the Malagasy migratory locust in a few months. Given the on going political situation in the country, survey and monitoring activities may not have been carried out as desired and it is likely that some breeding activities may have already occurred in a few traditional breeding places, including the Horombe plateau. It is advisable that any

NGO staff or others who may have access to the breeding areas, if possible, conduct survey and monitoring to minimize the chance of any potential future outbreaks.

7. Other locusts and grasshoppers. Limited outbreaks of the Moroccan or Mediterranean locust, Dociostaurus marocccanus (Thunberg) were reported in northern Afghanistan as well as northern and southern Tajikistan, where estimated 42,000 ha of pasture and some crop fields are infested. In Afghanistan, the multi-donor supported locust activities are well underway. Control operations and capacity strengthening activities have been carried out in a number of outbreak areas. In Tajikistan, spray operations were carried out on some 4,000 ha. Locust outbreaks were also reported in Peru in April into May and details are being awaited. Vigilant surveillance and monitoring are recommended to avoid any potential damage to crops and pasture.

8. Armyworm, Spodoptera exempta (Walker). Small larval outbreaks were controlled in April, 2002 in parts of Tororo District, Uganda. Larval outbreaks and infestations were also reported on pasture and crop fields in eastern, coastal, western and the rift valley regions of Kenya. Late reports indicated that serious and widespread infestations of armyworm larvae were manifested in various regions in Tanzania. Approximately 20,000 ha of maize were infested in Moshi District, where replanting had to be done in some farms. 4,500 has of maize and 15,000 ha of pasture were also infested in Arusha District. Dursban was applied by ground means to control the pest. Armyworm activities were not reported from the other DLCO/EA and IRLCO/CSA member countries in April.

9. Red-billed quelea, Quelea quelea (L.). Large number of quelea birds were seen damaging irrigated rice in Nyanza Province, Kenya. Quelea birds were reported attacking small grain cereals in a number of Districts in Tanzania. No quelea outbreaks were reported from the other DLCO/EA and IRLCO/CSA member countries. Quelea populations are expected to increase in Tanzania, Zambia and parts of Kenya during the forecast period. Elsewhere the numbers will remain low. Vigilant survey and control operations are recommended. END OF SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION: WEATHER AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

10. Most of Sahelian west Africa remained dry in March and April. Isolated showers fell in northern Mali in April. Most of the vegetation has dried up and only few green spots persisted in wadis and low laying areas in southern and western Mauritania, Adrar des Iforas and Timetirne, Mali and Tamesna, Niger. Ecological conditions remained dry elsewhere in the region.

11. Light to moderate rains fell in parts of Morocco, southwestern Algeria and central Algeria. Hot and dry conditions prevailed elsewhere in northwestern Africa where breeding conditions continued to be unfavorable.

12. Dry conditions persisted in eastern Africa. Significant cloud covers were seen over Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea in April. Light rains fell a number of times in eastern Ethiopia, near Dire Dawa and Jijiga as a result of which breeding conditions have improved. Light rains have also fallen in eastern Djibouti. Some green vegetation was also sighted in Somalia and parts of Eritrea.

13. Light and unusual rain fell in March and April over vast areas in the Arabian Peninsula, including south-central Saudi Arabia and Oman. Light to moderate rain also fell in southern Yemen along the Red Sea coasts, which will likely improve breeding conditions in these areas during the forecast period. Dry conditions prevailed elsewhere in the region.

14. Light rain fell in March and April in a few spots in Baluchistan, western Pakistan, the Indo-Pakistan border in Cholistan and Rajasthan, however, mainly dry conditions persisted in most of these areas. Heavy rains were reported in Tajikistan and parts of Afghanistan during the reporting period. Dry conditions prevailed elsewhere in the region.

15. In April, normal rain fell in the following red locust outbreak areas: Buzi-Gorongosa (113 mm), Wembere plains (116 mm), Malagarasi Basin (275 mm), and Kafwe Flats (79 mm). Breeding conditions were favorable for red locusts in almost all of the IRLCO/CSA outbreak regions.

DESERT LOCUST ACTIVITY

16. Western and northwestern Africa. With the exception of a few solitary adults that were seen in Niger, no locusts were reported in western and northwestern Africa. Most of the vegetation has dried up and only few green spots persisted in wadis and low laying areas in southern and western Mauritania, Adrar des Iforas and Timetirne, Mali and Tamesna, Niger.

17. Forecast: A few adult locusts are expected to persist and concentrate on patches of green vegetation in parts of Inchir, southern Adrar and in the summer breeding areas of Tagant, Trarza and northern Brakna, Mauritania. Isolated adults may also appear and persist in the Timetrine and the Adrar des Iforas, Niger and the Draa Valley, Morocco. No significant developments are likely during the forecast period.

18. Eastern and northeastern Africa, and the Near East: No locusts were reported in these regions in March or April.

19. Forecast: A few isolated adults may appear and persist in the Red Sea coastal plains of Djibouti, Saudi Arabia and Yemen where small-scale breeding may occur in the coming months. No locust activities are expected in other countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Kuwait, Oman, UAR, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Qatar, Syria, and Turkey. Routine monitoring remains essential to avert any undetected locust upsurges.

20. Eastern region. Isolated adults at very low densities (0-4 insects/ha) were sighted in a doze locations in Baluchistan, Pakistan during the survey carried out in April. No locusts were seen elsewhere in the region. Locusts continued to pose threat in the Central Asian countries including Afghanistan and Tajikistan, where outbreaks have been seen and controlled on hundreds of ha of pasture and crop fields. In Afghanistan, the multi-donor supported project that is being lead by the UN/FAO is well underway. Mechanical and chemical control operations are being launched. Staff training and capacity strengthening activities have been implemented in the outbreak areas to a certain extent. In Tajikistan, infestations were reported on some 42,000 ha mainly on pasture and also in some crop fields. Some 4000 ha were treated with pesticides. In some areas, heavy rains and floods destroyed egg pods and hoppers. No further detail is available.

21. Forecast: It is likely that in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, the locusts have moved or will move into crop fields and could cause substantial damage if left addressed. Locust numbers will decline in Baluchistan, Pakistan and significant locust activities are not expected during the forecast period in these regions. Locust numbers could increase in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Survey, monitoring, and control operations are required to avert any serious damage.

22. LAC regions. Locust outbreaks were reported in Peru in April into May and details are being awaited.

23. Forecast. It is likely that some locust activities could continue during the forecast period, but the level of severity cannot be estimated at this time.

OTHER LOCUST ACTIVITY

24. Red locust, N. septemfasciata (Surville). Significant red locust populations were reported in March in the Iku-Katavi and Malagarasi outbreak areas, Tanzania and persisted. The red locust situation in Lake Chilwa plains in Malawi, Buzi-Gorongosa in Mozambique, Lake Rukwa and Wembere plains in Tanzania and the Kafue Flats in Zambia, remained relatively calm.

25. Forecast: Grass burning in the red locust outbreak areas is likely to begin in late June and force adult locusts to concentrate in a few areas in Iku-Katavi and Malagarasi outbreak areas and could possibly for small swarms if control is not carried out between now and June. The locust situation in the other outbreak areas will likely remain calm.

26. Madagascar migratory Locust, locusta migratoria capito (L.). As a result of the ongoing political unrest in the country, no reports were received on the Malagasy migratory locust in a few months. Under the current conditions, it may be quite difficult to carry out survey and monitoring activities and it is likely that some breeding activities may have already occurred in a few outbreak areas, including the Horombe plateau.

27. Forecast: It is likely that some breeding activities that have occurred in a few places, including the Horombe plateau and could continue to further develop. It is advisable that any NGOs or others that may have access to the outbreak/breeding areas, conduct survey and monitoring if and whenever possible to avert any potential outbreaks.

ARMYWORM ACTIVITY

28. Armyworm, Spodoptera exempta (Walker). Small larval outbreaks were controlled in April, 2002 in parts of Tororo District, Uganda bordering western Kenya. In March, different larval instars were reported on pasture and crop fields in Nakuru, Kajiado, Kwale, Kilifi, Malindi, Bungoma, and Makueni districts, Kenya. Late reports indicated that serious and widespread infestations of armyworm larvae were manifested in the following regions in Tanzania: in Kilimanjaro Region, infestations were seen on approx. 20,000 ha of maize in Hai and Moshi Districts, where some replanting had to be done in some farms. In this region, 240 liters of Dursban were used to control the pest by ground means; in Arusha Region, approximately 4,500 ha of maize and more than 15,000 ha of pasture were infested. Armyworm activities were not reported from the other DLCO/EA and IRLCO/CSA member country in April.

29. Forecast: Armyworm outbreaks are likely to occur in Kenya and northern Tanzania.

QUELEA BIRD ACTIVITY

30. Red-billed quelea, Quelea quelea (L.). Quelea birds continued being a problem to small grain cereal growers in Shinyanga, Singida, Dodoma, Iringa, Arusha and Mwanza regions of Tanzania. Crops attacked included, rice, sorghum and millet. Control operations were carried out against

quelea birds on more than 327 ha in Shinyanga Region, Tanzania by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in collaboration with the DLCO-EA.

31. Forecast: Quelea and other grain eating birds are likely to continue being a problem to small grain cereal growers in Tanzania. Quelea breeding might commence in late May and early June in the traditional breeding areas of Kenya if the weather conditions are favorable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

32. Although the current locust and other migratory pest populations, by and large, did not call for significant control actions, some intensive control operations were carried out against different pests in a number of countries. It should be noted that, if left unattended, there is a likelihood for the pest populations to gradually increase in the coming months to a level that could pose serious threats to crops and pasture. Therefore, it is crucial that regular surveillance and monitoring are maintained and that reports are communicated promptly to the appropriate bodies within the national and/or regional systems.

ACTION REQUESTED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

33. The Africa Emergency Locust and Grasshopper Assistance (AELGA) project is administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), bureau for Africa (AFR), Office of Sustainable Development (SD), crisis mitigation and recovery division (CMR). AELGA works closely with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (UN/FAO), DLCO/EA, IRLOC/CSA, USAID bilateral and regional missions, research establishments, and host country ministries to provide continuous monitoring and analysis of crop protection risks associated with ETOPs that have a potential for causing large-scale outbreak emergencies. The purpose of this effort is to acquire data and information on ETOPs to prepare regular updates and disseminated to all interested stakeholders. Unsolicited reports or information about ETOPs situations and activities in your region or country are welcome and appreciated.

34. Missions with programs on food security, emergency pests and other related activities, host countries and regional organizations with a similar portfolio, as well as other stakeholders are kindly requested to forward your reports by the last day of each month. Please, forward reports, info., questions, and/or requests to Dr. Yene Belayneh, ybelayneh@afr-sd.org, FAX: 202-219-0506 with a cc to Drs. Joe Vorgetts (jvorgetts@afr-sd.org) and Harry Bottenberg (hxb@ars.usda.gov.

For more information on the desert locust situation, you may visit:

http://www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm